

_____ Sanctuary Advisory Council
c/o _____, Chair
address
address

Dear Sanctuary Advisory Council Members:

I am writing to ask you to join the National Marine Sanctuary Program and me in a new Initiative called *Blue Seas, Green Communities*. This initiative seeks to protect our sanctuary resources and expand our stewardship efforts for all Americans by contributing to the greening of our sanctuary communities and building the greening capacity of the sanctuary staff and council members.

The initiative at this stage is tri-fold. First, I would ask that each advisory council form a small standing greening working group or subcommittee. The working group would form the backbone for the *Blue Seas, Green Communities* effort.

Second, each site will be asked to work with their working group to identify, then initiate, facilitate and/or enhance a project in their local community that contributes to the greening of the community and the protection of sanctuary resources. These projects should have the maximal impact for your community and have the capacity to serve as demonstration projects for other coastal communities around the nation and the world.

To facilitate this effort, and subject to the availability of funds, I will provide a small amount of funding for each site to dedicate to the identified project. We will also include a greening session at the 2008 Chairs and Coordinators Meeting in May to further discuss this initiative and obtain feedback on progress from participants at the meeting. The projects, their progress, and results will be used in various outreach efforts, including an online feature story, articles in sanctuary magazines and newsletters, and other outlets as appropriate. At the 2009 Annual Leadership Awards Dinner during Capitol Hills Ocean Week, we may award one project as the best of the greening projects.

Finally, and again dependent upon the availability of funding, we will identify and/or arrange for greening training for a select number of council members (as recommended by the greening working groups) and sanctuary staff (20-30 total). This will increase the greening capacity of our sites, councils, and the sanctuary communities; these trainees will be expected to play active roles, program-wide at times, in the *Blue Seas, Green Communities* initiative, and carry it forward into its next steps, which we will identify together.

As the next step, I would ask each of you to discuss the initiative with your sanctuary superintendent; take up this idea at your next council meeting; and provide me with a response about your willingness to take on this initiative by the end of the year.

As I have said in the past, our councils are absolutely vital to everything that we do, and you have risen again and again to every challenge that the National Marine Sanctuary Program has laid at your feet. I look forward to working with you as we tackle the challenges of a green future together.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Basta
Director
National Marine Sanctuary Program